

# TOWN OF NEWINGTON

## TOWN HALL RENOVATION PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE

### MEETING MINUTES

December 3, 2012

#### TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM L101

- I. Call to Order –the meeting was called to order at 5:35 PM by Chairperson McBride.
- II. Roll Call – Members present: Scott McBride, Chairperson; Myra Cohen; Sharon Braverman; Pam Raynock; and Bill DeBlasio. Others present: Members of the public; Jen Win-Johnson; John Salomone, Town Manager; William Collins, Ph.D, Superintendent of Schools; Lou Jachimowicz, Chief Finance and Operations Officer; Bruce Till, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation; Robert Korpak, Director of Facilities Management; and Jeff Baron, Director of Administrative Services.
- III. Public Participation – Anna Eddy, 41 Churchill Way, President of the Lucy Robbins Welles Library Board. She wished to clarify that the piece of property adjacent to the library is owned by the Library Board of Trustees, not the Friends of the Library. She also extended support to the Project Building Committee’s efforts, and offered to provide information and support for what the Building Committee might need in the future. The library will also be looking at an addition in the future, when the time is right.
- IV. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – Mrs. Braverman asked that the previous meeting minutes be amended to remove “for children” from page two. Mr. Baron will make this correction. Mrs. Cohen then made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2012 meeting, to include the amendment requested. Second by Mrs. Raynock. The motion passed unanimously.
- V. Parks and Recreation Program Information – presented by Mr. Till, who distributed a year’s worth of brochures on Parks and Recreation programs in order to give the members perspective on how active the Mortensen Community Center and the Parks and Recreation Department is. He reported that the size of the Mortensen Community Center gym, from wall to wall, is 7,372 square feet. The basketball court is 74 by 50 feet. Not including bleachers, sidelines, etc., a high school basketball court is 4,200 feet and a college basketball court is 4,700 square feet. He also reminded

the Committee that the items his department would like to see are included in the interview summary and the Kaestle Boos Associates' Space Needs Assessment that were part of Lee Olsen's Feasibility Study. Mrs. Raynock asked what size the gym will be in the new building compared to what the Community Center has now. Would it increase? Mr. Till responded that he would recommend a gym and a half. This would allow the department to partition or curtain off sections for more than one use at a time, say to allow aerobics at the same time as a basketball game. His belief is that one gym does not meet the Town's needs now and would not do so in the future either. Mrs. Raynock asked if Mr. Olsen's estimate included expansion or what the Town has now for square footage. Staff did not know. Mr. Till stated that the Committee would need to know what kind of building it was going to put up before a cost could be determined. Mrs. Cohen asked about the square footage for the entire area that the Committee is looking to replace, not just the gym. No figure was readily available. Mr. McBride would also like the Committee to look not just at square footage but also at developing a space that maximizes usefulness.

- VI. Further Consideration of Potential Community Center sites – The Committee felt that it could eliminate certain sites for the future home of the Mortensen Community Center, such as those that would displace the current Transportation Garage or that keep the Community Center attached to the Town Hall. The Committee discussed each scheme [A through I (3)] and agreed by consensus to either keep the scheme for future consideration or eliminate it unless future circumstances required reconsideration. Scheme A (placing the Mortensen Community Center where the clay tennis courts are currently located at the far side of Mill Pond Park), keep; Scheme B, (placing the Mortensen Community Center where a portion of the Transportation Garage currently is located) eliminate; Scheme C (placing the Mortensen Community Center where the current overflow parking lot on the Garfield Street currently is), eliminate; Scheme D (placing the Mortensen Community Center where it currently is and straightening Garfield Street), eliminate; Scheme E (placing the Mortensen Community Center on the other side of Garfield street, down near Willard Avenue), keep; Scheme F (not considered at any time by the Committee), eliminate; Scheme G (placing the Mortensen Community Center across Garfield Street so that it encroaches on the present baseball diamond in Mill Pond Park), after considerable discussion, keep; Scheme H (keeping the Mortensen Community Center where it is currently located), eliminate; and Scheme I (3) (locating the Mortensen Community Center where the youth soccer fields are currently located at the far end of Mill Pond Park, along Willard Avenue), keep. Mr. Salomone informed the Committee that he intended to recommend that straightening Garfield Street be kept in the Capital Improvement Plan, separate from this project.

- VII. Future Meetings – The Town Clerk has made the annual request for regular meeting dates for each committee for the upcoming year. Some individuals have encountered difficulty with meetings on the third Monday of each month. The Committee agreed by consensus to continue to hold their regular meetings on the first Monday of each month and to have any additional meetings, as needed, on a floating basis, as determined by the availability of the membership and the demands of the tasks before the Committee. The next meeting will be on December 17<sup>th</sup>, when there will be a joint presentation by the Board of Education staff to this and other Project Building Committees on the changes in how the State education grants are being administered by the State and the impact on Newington. The Committee will also be considering short listing construction manager firms for interviews.
- VIII. Any Other Business Pertinent to the Committee– None.
- IX. Public Participation – Madey Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive. She thanked the Committee for putting lots of thought into their considerations. She asked that the bus garage be shown on each scheme and that the visual presentation of the potential library addition be eliminated. These make a difference in how the schemes come across.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive. It is hard to visualize when things that may or may not happen are present. The Committee is deciding where the Mortensen Community Center will be relocated to and what is the most cost effective way to relocate it. Are these schemes part of a master plan? Mr. Till said, when discussing Scheme G, that the baseball field couldn't fit in the space allotted. Scheme I is the only one no one has an objection to. Who came up with these schemes? What information was given to them? Do you need all the parking at Town Hall if parking is added to the Mortensen Community Center?

Don Woods, 82 Ivy Lane, and Chair of the Board of Parks and Recreation. Scheme G is the worst possible choice that could be offered to the Parks and Recreation Department. There is no place else to put the Extravaganza. It would be the least favorable of the options to the Board of Parks and Recreation. It would interfere with the functionality of the park, and that is a problem. Regarding Scheme I, the displacement of the soccer fields could be accommodated. As to square footage, 25,000 to 32,000 is needed. Currently there is 16,000 square feet. Hopefully Mr. Olsen anticipated the larger facility.

- X. Committee response to public participation –Mrs. Raynock stated that Scheme G came in after others were presented in February because she asked for a scheme that showed the Mortensen Community Center across

the street. Chairperson McBride stated that regarding certain schemes, some may not work for how the Town Hall will be renovated. The Committee currently is considering the Mortensen Community Center and then will consider the Town Hall. The Committee needs to be careful not to set back the larger part of the project, which is the Town Hall.

XI. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jeff Baron*

Jeff Baron  
Director of Administrative Services